

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00558 020822Z

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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 AID-05 SR-02 SAM-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1422

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 0558

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, AO, ZA

SUBJECT: ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN ZAMBIA

REF: KINSHASA 2209; LUANDA 304

1. EMBOFF CALLED MARCH 26 ON UNHCR RESREP DEMMER TO SEEK INFORMATION ON SIZE AND PROSPECTS FOR REPATRIATION OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES CURRENTLY IN ZAMBIA.

2. NUMBER: DEMMER ESTIMATES ANGOLAN REFUGEE POPULATION HERE AT APPROXIMATELY 25,000. NOTE: THIS IS LOWER THAN FIGURES PROVIDED BY ANGOLAN SOURCES. ABRIGADA (REFTEL B) USES FIGURE OF 30,000 COMPILED LAST YEAR, WHILE UNITA CLAIMS 30,000 TO 40,000 (LUSAKA 538). ZAMBIAN FONMIN MWAANGA TOLD US NUMBER OF ANGOLANS IS 37,000. IRONICALLY, DEMMER NOTED, THERE CONTINUES BE TRICKLE OF
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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 00558 020822Z

ANGOLANS ACROSS BORDER INTO ZAMBIA, PROBABLY FOR ECONOMIC

REASONS.

3. LOCATION: EIGHT THOUSAND ANGOLANS ARE SPLIT BETWEEN REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS AT MAHAIBA AND MYUKAYUKA. REMAINING 17,000 ARE BELIEVE LIVING IN VILLAGES ALONG ANGOLAN BORDER. MANY OF LATTER CATEGORY ARE LOVALE OR OVIMBUNDU CLOSELY RELATED TO TRIBES ON ZAMBIAN SIDE OF BORDER AND MAY HAVE SIMPLY MIGRATED HERE RATHER THAN HAVE COME AS REFUGEES.

4. POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS: TO DEMMER'S KNOWLEDGE, VIRTUALLY ALL FREEDOM FIGHTERS (NOT COUNTED AS REFUGEES) AND THEIR DEPENDENTS CAMPED NEAR ANGOLAN BORDER HAVE RETURNED TO ANGOLA. MOST OF THESE WERE MPLA. UNITA NEVER HAD VERY MANY TROOPS INSIDE ZAMBIA. OF THOSE REFUGEES IN SETTLEMENTS, SHE ESTIMATES THEY SPLIT FIFTY-FIFTY BETWEEN SUPPORTERS OF UNITA AND OF MPLA, SITUATION THAT HAS LED TO AT LEAST ONE RECENT CLASH BETWEEN OPPOSING FACTIONS. POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS OF REMAINDER ARE UNKNOWN BUT AS THEY FROM SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL ANGOLA TRIBES IT PROBABLE THEIR SYMPATHIES (IF ANY) WOULD LIE WITH FELLOW TRIBESMEN JONAS SAVIMBI AND DANIEL CHIPENDA RATHER THAN WITH NETO'S MPLA.

5. ATTITUDE TOWARD REPATRIATION: DEMMER ESTIMATES THAT MAJORITY OF REFUGEES WOULD CHOOSE TO RETURN TO ANGOLA. MANY OF THOSE IN BORDER AREAS COULD PROBABLY JUST WALK BACK ACROSS BORDER THE WAY THEY CAME; OTHERS MIGHT DEFER RETURN UNTIL AFTER NEXT HARVEST SEASON. SO FAR "COUPLE OF HUNDRED" REFUGEES, MOSTLY YOUNG MEN, HAVE LEFT SETTLEMENTS TO RETURN TO ANGOLA, EITHER BECAUSE THEY POLITICAL MILITANTS OR BECAUSE THEY HOPE FIND WORK THERE.

6. REPATRIATION PLANS: THERE ARE NONE AT PRESENT. GRZ POSITION IS THAT ANY REFUGEES WHO WISH TO GO HOME MAY DO SO BUT IT IS NOT ENCOURAGING THEM TO LEAVE BEFORE FACILITIES FOR THEIR RE-SETTLEMENT ARE READY INSIDE ANGOLA. THIS CONFIRMED BY PRESIDENT'S ADVISER MARK CHONA. DEMMER IS AWARE THAT UNHCR TEAM WHICH RECENTLY VISITED ANGOLA HAS PREPARED PROPOSALS ON REFUGEE REPATRIATION BUT DOES NOT EXPECT HAVE OPPORTUNITY REVIEW THESE BEFORE TWO OR THREE MORE WEEKS. WERE DECISION TAKEN BY ANGOLAN PROV GOVT TO REQUEST REPATRIATION OF AS MANY REFUGEES AS POSSIBLE

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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 00558 020822Z

IN TIME FOR OCT ELECTIONS, DEMMER CONSIDERS RECEPTION CENTERS INSIDE ANGOLA WOULD NEED BE IN PLACE BY END OF JULY SO THAT THOSE REPATRIATED COULD BE ON LAND BEFORE END OF AUGUST TO GIVE THEM TIME PREPARE AND SOW CROP. ROAD IMPROVEMENTS BETWEEN ZAMBIAN BORDER AND ANGOLAN RESETTLEMENT CENTERS WILL ALSO BE NEEDED. DEMMER ESTIMATES COST OF REPATRIATING ANGOLANS IN DOLS 200,000 TO 300,000 RANGE, MOSTLY FOR TRANSPORT. ZAMBIAN ARMY MIGHT PROVIDE SOME VEHICLES BUT UNHCR WOULD NEED IN ADDITION ABOUT

TEN TEN-TON TRUCKS TO MOVE ANGOLANS AND THEIR BELONGINGS ACROSS BORDER. AS UNHCR AND GRZ ARE ALREADY AT WORK PLANNING REPATRIATION OF MOZAMBIQUE REFUGEES THIS SUMMER, DECISION TO REPATRIATE ANGOLANS AT SAME TIME WOULD SEVERELY TAX EXISTING ADMINISTRATIVE AND TRANSPORT CAPABILITIES HERE. CHONA TOLD US HE SERIOUSLY DOUBTS SUCCESSFUL EFFORT COULD BE MOUNTED TO GET ANGOLAN REFUGEES BACK AND ESTABLISHED AND EDUCATED ON CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN TIME TO VOTE IN OCT ELECTIONS.

7. COMMENT: NO PLANNING FOR IMMINENT RETURN OF ANGOLANS FROM ZAMBIA HAS THUS FAR TAKEN PLACE AND GRZ DOES NOT APPEAR EVEN BE IN CONTACT WITH ANGOLAN PROV GOVT OR WITH UNHCR ON QUESTION OF REPATRIATION. THIS SITUATION COULD CHANGE IF LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND/OR PROV GOVT WERE TO MAKE APPEAL TO GRZ TO HELP REPATRIATE REFUGEES PRIOR TO FALL ELECTIONS. IF THEY DID SO, HOWEVER, PLANNING WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE IN RUSH AND WITH DIMINISHED PROSPECTS FOR ORDERLY MOVEMENT, RECEPTION, AND RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES UPON THEIR ARRIVAL HOME.
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